the bridegroom and part with her parents. The bridewealth payments now begin and the wife's parents try to hurry up the payments by luring her home on frequent visits. The bridegroom cannot prevent her departure or demand her return. To get her to return he hands over another animal and she then stays with him for a short while. This procedure is repeated until the bride is definitely recognised as his wife and stays with him except for brief visits to her old home. 585

The *riso* ceremony is the binding act of marriage. After it the husband is entitled to redress if the wife has intercourse with other men. As the husband is anxious to start a home and cannot do so while his wife keeps running back to her parents, he presses for the *riso* ceremony to be held as soon as he has paid 6 to 12 head of cattle. It is rare for a marriage to be broken off after this stage has been reached. The *riso* ceremony is held in the husband's homestead and is a day of celebration. The wife is given a series of presents by her husband's people, each gift being named as it is presented to her. She herself keeps none of them and they are taken by the girls of the *riso* party from her parents' village. [431]

The final ceremony takes place a few months later when the husband tells his wife to cook for him instead of cooking in his mother's hut. Usually after the birth of the first child he begins to built an *ot* - a proper dwelling; up to this time the couple have lived in the bachelors' hut *(simba)*. Necessary household articles are collected by the wife from her parents' home and so, after a great number of ceremonies and rituals, the union is accomplished and the basis of a family is laid.

RESPECT *(LUR)*

The Luo practise extensive avoidance as a part of the general attitude of respect to a wife's family. A man turns his back to his parents-in-law when speaking to them and avoids them if he meets them on a path. He never visits his mother-in-law naked.(1) This attitude of respect is extended to all the members of his wife's lineage, particularly the older people, and including the lineage of her maternal uncle. The husband's brothers, on the other hand, respect only his parents-in-law and immediate kin of their generation. 576 606

The avoidance rules are relaxed as the marriage gradually grows more stable and children are born. A ceremony is held at the birth of the first child to enable the husband to enter his mother-in-law's hut and eat there. The husband and his brothers are invited to eat after a goat has been presented to them.(2) 606 [431]

## RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The Luo believe in a supreme being whom they call Nyasi. He is 776

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, XX, p. 41. (2) *Ibid.*

3: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1950 FL11 Luo FL11



knows more or less what is going to happen. If the husband is really poor the father will eventually give way. If he has a number of cattle the *jagam* gives way and promises one more beast. It is very rare for a marriage to be broken off on account of cattle at this stage. If the father is very obstinate the husband's people return home leaving the husband behind to sulk in his father-in-law's *simba*. He refuses to eat the food his mother-in-law sends him there and gets an occasional meal with friends in the vicinity. After several days his father-in-law says to him: 'Hello, are you still here? What are you doing here?' The young man replies: 'I want to die here in your kraal.' The father-in-law says: 'You can't do that. Get out.' He refuses to go without his wife and finally the father-in-law says: 'I am tired of you both. Get out and take your wife with you, and mind you pay that cow quickly', and he calls his daughter and tells her to get out with her husband as he is tired of seeing him there. He pushes them both out of the homestead.

The ceremony of *riso* is then held in the husband's homestead, where he has collected all his relatives and friends. It is a day of great gaiety. The wife and a party of girls from her home come singing to her husband's home. When they are a few hundred yards from his homestead the wife and two of her friends hide themselves. The other girls come on in a body, enter the kraal and go straight to the *simba*. One of the husband's brothers asks where are the rest of the party, meaning the wife. The wife's eldest sister replies: 'I don't understand what you are talking about. There is no one missing. We are all here.' Some youths are sent out to scout round to see if they can find the wife. They move softly, looking about them and listening for sounds. When they find the wife they pull her to the entrance of the kraal. Here she says: 'I don't want to enter your homestead. You give me what you know.' He promises to give it to her later in the *simba*, but she refuses to enter without a payment, so he gives her an arm-ring, called *manyonge* in Alego and *onyonge* in South Luoland. At the entrance to the *simba* she says she must have something in return for bending down to enter it and they often make her another gift for this purpose, though a rough brother of her husband may just take her by the scruff of the neck and push her in. In the hut she says that she is very tired and wants to sit down. One of the men forces her to sit.

The visiting girls spend the night at the husband's home. Some of them may spend it with local youths in their bachelor-huts. Next morning the husband's people bring a bull or an ox and call the senior girl of the wife's people and ask her to accept it. She always says that it is too small, but when the husband pleads poverty she accepts it. The visiting girls take some of the meat home with them on the following day, but they eat most of it that night in the *simba* after the husband's people have given the wife an ornament in return for that privilege. They must give her another present to enable her to sit down there. All the husband's people bring her gifts. She sits with her legs tucked under her and has to be given a present to stretch them. She says she wants to spit and they give her something to enable her to do so. She says that soot from the roof may fall in her eyes, and they give her something to compensate her for the risk. They also give her a number of other presents, each of which has its name: *rs jaayi maro*, a goat to pay in advance for any insulting remarks the husband may make about his mother-in-law; *rs lwor tawo*, a goat for the wife to place her husband's daily gruel respectfully before him; *gir bangala higa*, an ornament for the burns a wife

may incur while cooking; *gir ote*, an ornament for the errands the husband will send his wife on; *gir ngolo olawo*, an ornament for cleaning up the spittle her husband will always be expectorating on the floor; *gir logo*, a present for the water a wife brings her husband to wash his hands with; *gir teno wic*, a present to enable the husband to sleep with his head on his wife's arm; *gir tingo kom*, a present for fetching her husband's stool; *diend then*, a goat to enable her to cook in her husband's home; and perhaps others. These gifts are made to the wife by her *yuro*, the paternal kinsfolk of her husband, particularly by his brothers. Each gift must be named when it is presented to her. The wife herself keeps none of these gifts. They are taken by the girls of the *riso* party and others of her kinswomen.

Next morning the husband chaffs his sisters-in-law, asking them where they have spent the night. They reply: ' You are bad people and you have done us an injury. You are enemies, you and your wife also.' The girls have a midday meal and leave for home taking with them the *riso* gifts and the remainder of the meat. To the south of the gulf the husband's people send the meat to the bride's home before the ceremony, except for the portion they keep for the girls of her home who attend it.

*Sepo*

After the *riso* the wife remains with her husband. She may visit her parents after two or three months, but she does not constantly return to them as before. Likewise, her husband's people cannot now seize her when they see her at a public gathering, for she is now a *dhako*, wife, and not a *miaha*, bride. A few months later takes place the final ceremony of marriage, the *sepo*, called *gango* in Southern Luoland. One day the husband says to his wife that he wants her to cook for him instead of cooking in the hut of his mother, which up to this time she has used for the purpose, she and her husband making the *simba* their dwelling-place. The younger brothers of the husband have in the meanwhile built themselves a new *simba*. Now the husband—usually after the birth of his first child—begins to build an *ot*, a proper dwelling-hut. The wife goes back to her parents to tell them that her husband wants her to do her cooking in her own hut. They raise no objection. The husband's father also gives his consent.

The wife returns once more to her parents to collect household utensils with which to start a home of her own. They give her pots, gourds, a wooden spoon, and other utensils. If they are rich they also give her an ox, if poor a sheep or a goat and some fowls and flour. Only a few girls accompany her to her husband's home to help her carry these things. When they arrive there her husband's brother's wife brings three cooking-stones and calling the wife tells her that she wants to teach her how to cook. She goes through the usual actions preliminary to cooking a meal and when all is prepared the wife cooks it and serves it to her kinswomen who have accompanied her. Sometimes they have brought a sheep or goat with them from the wife's home so that she can serve them with meat.

*Miloha*

The marriage has been successfully brought about by the succession of ceremonial stages described. Had sufficient cattle not been paid the parents of the wife would not have permitted the rites to proceed to a conclusion. There seem to be several words for bridewealth among the Luo: *miloha*, *dho nyuombo*, and *dho kony*. The number of

585 bride. It is a curious fact that only young men (*yanyuoye* = bachelors)
[184] may eat this part of the animal. The elders told me that in Gem, Alego, Seme, Ugoma, Asembo, Kadimu and Ugenya the breast is set aside to be eaten in the early morning by the friends of the bridegroom. But in Kano, Kisumu, Nyakach and Kabondo it is used as I have described.

One fore-leg and one hind [redacted] sent to the parents of the bride, and two small pieces of the liver were also allotted to them. The rest of the liver was eaten by the older men living in the *dala*, and the lungs, heart, and stomach were divided and disposed of in the same way as the liver. The thick part of the stomach was also the perquisite of the older men, who also ate the contents of the small intestine mixed with blood and used as a relish. This concoction was called *kichuri* and was highly esteemed. Half of it was sent to the
[184] bride's father. Here again there was a difference between the customs of Alego, Gem, Seme, Ugoma, Sakwa, Kadimu, and Ugenya on the one hand, and those of Kisumu, Kano, Nyakach, and Kabondo on the other. For in the former districts *kichuri* was eaten by men and women, whereas in the latter districts only the men were allowed to eat it. This difference may well provide an interesting clue to the past history of these two divisions.

The hump was divided into two parts, one being sent to the bride's parents, and the other half being eaten by the parents of the bridegroom. The ribs and loins were the portion of the women
[262 guests, who were also allotted the kidney and the pancreas which men
753] are forbidden to eat, for fear of contracting the disease known as *hydrocele*. Women with child may not eat these portions in case the child is a boy.

585 After the *kirisya* was over the girl was regarded as having finally
591 passed into the fully married state. But even so there were still certain ceremonies which had to be observed before she could take up her residence in her own hut, specially built for her by her husband and there assume the normal duties of a married woman.

The building of this hut was never begun until the wedding feast was over. While it was being constructed the girl slept first in the *simba* hut, and later in her mother-in-law's hut; and before it was finished the girl returned to her own home for a short visit, taking with her that part of the dried fore-leg of the bull (*bad jachien*) which had been set aside for her mother at the wedding feast, as well as
585 other presents of food. It was explained to me that these gifts were
● [431] in the nature of a compensation to the mother for her absence from her daughter's wedding feast, and they may indicate that in earlier times it was the custom for the mother to accompany her daughter on that occasion. While the girl was at home the mother prepared a

241 common to allow some of the sturdier roots to spring up again and give a second crop. I have seen some very fine heads of grain as a result of this method.

251 The crop is stored, unthreshed if millet or maize, in large basket-
578 like receptacles, covered with thatch and standing on stones or supported on forked sticks across which a rough platform is made. It is the work of the man to prepare the grain stores, and I suppose that there is no more prolific source of domestic bickering than these supply. Some men are shiftless, and leave off the preparation of the stores until near to harvest, sometimes exhausting in so doing the patience of the wife. Or he may be neglectful, and leave the thatch unrepaired, rendering the grain liable to suffer from the weather. Many women would far rather see the living hut left in disrepair than that the grain should be imperilled.

251 The store varies in size according to the grain for which it is
285 intended. The large size is for millet and maize, the small for the small millet and simsim. The Luo name for them is " dero." The large sizes run up to six feet high by about six feet in diameter. The small about four feet by three. They are made from swamp reeds built in a very coarse basket work fashion, and are finished off with a coating of cow dung inside. The better made stores have provision for access to the grain, by the simple device of cutting away a section from the top of the side, just under the thatch. It used to be the
● [43] custom for a present of a small basket of grain to be given to the
791] Jabilo or medicine man, after harvest. This custom has already died out in many places.

241 It was the woman's first care to secure seed for the next year.
462 Millet and maize was hung in the head, sometimes outside from the branch of a tree, more frequently from the roof of the hut. Smaller grain, and beans were stored in pots in the living hut, and to ensure their being kept in good condition, it was the woman's duty to empty the contents of the pots periodically onto a " thigo " or large circular flat basket work tray, or some part of the courtyard swept clean, that the sun might keep them dry. Lack of seed, owing to a planting dying off from lack of rain was a serious matter. Seed was then begged from neighbours more fortunate.

422 Not all the grain went into the common store, for all the cultiva-
593 tion was by no means the common united effort of all the members of the family. The main effort of the members was put into the fields from which all were to draw their food supply, but in addition individual members had their own plots which are called " mondo." The head of the family would have his own " mondo," and the grain from this went into a separate store. This grain formed a reserve in

241 Similarly, during this time she must be careful where she walks. She
841 can ruin a crop by walking through it. But, of course, in this case, she would suffer with the other members of the family.

462 From early childhood the girl is brought up as an agricultural
787 labourer. There was no class of women divorced from the soil. The
791 only class whose labours in agriculture were lightened were the women who belonged to the divining cult of "SEWE." Sewe is the spirit of divination and is supposed to have descended on those who have been delirious in illness. The delirium is the sign of possession. The devotees of the cult are mainly women, and they are a fairly common sight as they go about their avocation. They are skilled beggars as
[301] well as diviners. With their bodies festooned with strings of beads, shells, bells and other barbaric ornaments, they pass from kraal to kraal, and standing with their bodies leaning forward supported by a
● [431] hand resting on a short stick they sing songs of the countryside and and are rewarded by presents of small baskets of grain. In this way women who have been ill are enabled to help to replenish the grain stores, which have probably run low during the illness.

241 Gradually a change is coming over the life of the women, due to
177 white influence. Ploughing by the men with teams of oxen, is setting
252 women free for other tasks. This movement is by no means wide-
462 spread, but it has begun, and its effect on the women has been great. Even if the husband has no team and plough himself, many wives do not rest content until the husband has hired a plough owner to come along and plough up the land. It is not unusual for ploughs to be taken 15 miles for this purpose. Again, the use of hand mills of the "Colonist" type, is easing women of much labour at the grind stones. These are much more common than ploughs, probably there are twenty mills for every plough in use. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the mills are turned by hand power, not by oxen. At this labour girls and women take their share, but whereas you would never see a man down on his knees at the grindstone, you do see them turning a mill. New activities are employing the time of many women, and those who have learned to knit or make palm mats in recent years are rapidly increasing in numbers.

CHILD LABOUR:

857 Generally speaking, from early childhood, all are required to make some contribution to the activities of the home. Girls for the fields, and boys for herding, is the broad division of labour, though the boys also lend a hand in the fields, and, very occasionally, a girl or woman may be seen herding. With the opening up of
583 avenues of wage-earning to the boys on coffee and tea estates, and in
[464 other forms of employment, a male child is being made by impecuni-
651] ous parents to make his contribution to the family hut tax.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11



shave their heads, taking care to keep separate the hair which is cut off. This hair is hidden away in some place near, by preference in a rat-hole or in some hole where it is not likely to be found again. 846

**Birth of twins.** At the birth of twins the parents remain together in one house for ten days, and the midwife waits on them. When this time of seclusion ends, a small pot of blood is drawn from the neck of an ox, cooked and given to the parents to eat. After the meal they are escorted to the river, washed, and their heads shaved. Their house is then swept and the floor smeared with cow-dung, and friends come and dance in the village and drink beer. The mother takes the twins a round of visits which lasts several days, but she returns home each night to sleep. At each house she visits the people give her presents of grain. When the visits have been made the mother brews beer with the grain she has received in presents, and her friends again gather to dance and to drink the beer. 845 [431]

**Initiation ceremonies.** Children live in the same village with their parents and under their control. Until marriage they lead a free and happy life, with few wants and cares. The boys assist in herding cattle, and the girls help their mothers in their fields and also carry wood and water and assist in cooking. Their duties are light and there is no force beyond argument used to make them work. Children imitate their elders in seeking ornaments to wear and in smearing their bodies with oil and red or white paint. When they come to the age of puberty, their four front teeth in the lower jaw are extracted and they are initiated in the customs of the clan. For four days they remain in the house, after which they go about visiting their friends and receive presents of fowls. Girls go through the same ceremony as boys in having their teeth extracted, but, in addition, their bodies are scarified on the sides and back. Should there be excessive haemorrhage when teeth are extracted, the parents send to the man who has the bracelets of the deceased person after whom the boy is named and borrow them, and the youth wears them until the bleeding ceases. When the ceremony of extracting the teeth is over, the boys are sent to live in the boys' quarters 857 [302] 881 304 [431] [752] 882

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11



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ments such as beads brass bangles, bracelets, ect. Then they are allowed to take the girl away, who goes along crying, or is dragged or pushed along and sometimes very roughly handled. After they have gone, the girls of the village dress themselves up in their best beads and tassels take their pipes and tobacco and follow them up.

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When all arrive at the boy's village the couple enter the *simbu*, where they spend the day together with the boys of the village and the girls who followed the fiancee. In the evening the boys leave the hut and the girls bring a cowhide, which they put down on the floor. The young couple lie together, the girls holding her down if she is afraid or shy. Immediately afterwards the girls look for the hymen. If they find some they put it on the leave of an *ochok*-plant and start singing. Their songs are not always very modest.

In the early morning they resume their singing and go home, singing all the way, carrying with them the hymen. Arriving at their kraal, the women meet them at the entrance, where the hymen is shown to them as a proof that the girl was still a virgin when leaving home. Then they throw it away, and the women of the kraal start singing and dancing with the girls, after which the latter get their morning meal of gruel and beans.

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After the girls have left the kraal of the bridegroom, the bride gets a new "chip" and a new tassel. The latter is given her together with a goat, which later her sister will fetch away. The chip which she gets is a special one made for the occasion by her sisters-in-law. It is a fringe about a four inches long by three inches wide, made from the twisted fibrous marrow of a kaffir-corn stalk; some of th strings are blackened with charcoal, others whitened with *migosi*, others again coloured with red oker. With string his fringe is tied round the bride's waist to cover her nakedness.

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From her brother-in-law the bride gets a hoe, formerly also a brass ornament round her forearm *(nato)* and a leather string with iron beads about ½ of an inch in diameter *(otuke)* to be worn round the waist. At present the bride gets with the hoe either a goat or the equivalent, 6 Shillings.

[301]

After 4 days the bride's father kills a bull and the meat is taken to the kraal of the bridegroom. Next day the people there have a good feed, and the morning following the women and girls of the neighbourhood gather to take the bride home to her father again. When getting near the kraal they sing and shout which rouses the women and girls of her own village, who come out dancing and singing to meet the bride. Arriving at the entrance the women of the kraal stand in the opening of the fence, and go on singing for a while, preventing the bride to enter. The singing finished, the brother of the bride brings a life chicken, of which he cuts the lower part of the beak. This is tied with a string round the bride's neck, and the chicken is given to the children of the village who now kill and eat it. Then the bride is allowed to enter. Food is brought, and the visitors stay for the night. In the early morning they go home again, leaving the bride with her father.

About 5 days later the bridegroom sends a couple of friends with 2 or 3 more head of cattle towards the dowry. One of them must be a heifer, and the man who takes the cattle over goes with a little stick of a pawpaw. With this stick

which is only eaten by men and young girls. Women despise sheep saying that they are the most foolish of animals and remark that their meat has a horrible odour. Poultry are placed by women in the same category as sheep because they eat dirty things, e.g., excreta and some ugly insects. 231 262

There are certain parts of a cow which are usually only eaten by special groups of people, e.g., the kidney and the abomasum are reserved for girls, the brisket and the abdominal muscles which originate from it for young men, the tongue and the hump for old men, and the diaphragm for those who take fresh blood from cattle for human consumption.

Cattle and goats are the chief animals used for the payment of dowries. Sheep are seldom used for this purpose because every girl believes that if a sheep is paid for her dowry it means that she is despised by her sweetheart. Sometimes this is enough to break off the marriage. The number of cattle paid for a dowry is usually between fourteen and twenty-four. More cattle are paid for the daughters of rich people and chiefs because these girls will, during their wedded life, take much property to their husbands: property collected during the frequent visits they pay to their fathers. 231 583 [554] [434]

In the course of paying a dowry, discussions go on between the father, uncle, full and step-brothers of the girl as to who will receive some of the special animals paid for her dowry. The same applies in the case of the payment of the dowry by the man, for although the father is responsible for paying most of the cattle, he is helped by some of his uncles and brothers. 583

The first eight to twelve cattle paid, three to five of which are females, are taken by the full brothers of the girl. Sometime after this payment has been made the girl is caught in the morning by relations of her sweetheart who take her to him. From this day the girl is known as *miaha* (the bride) and the husband as *wuon kisera* (the bridegroom). In the afternoon of the day on which she is caught, her sisters follow her and stay with her at the bridegroom's home for a night, after which they return to their own home early in the morning. The bride is left with one of her girl-cousins who stays with her until she is brought back to her home so that payment of special cattle for her different relations may commence. The first eight to twelve cattle which were paid before she met her husband are not special cattle because they can be inherited by any of her full brothers. Sometimes in the morning of the first night that the bride stays with the bridegroom, her sisters-in-law (the wives of her brothers) go to the bridegroom's kraal and choose a bull. This bull is inherited by the bride's eldest brother. About two weeks after the bride and her cousin have been at the bridegroom's home, her father slaughters an ox and the meat is taken to the bridegroom's house, some cooked 583 585